

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing data exchanged between a first trading partner and a second trading partner, the method comprising:

receiving a first data file from the first trading partner, the first data file having a first file format and being an electronic representation of at least one document;

5 translating the received first data file into at least one second data file having an XML file format, wherein the received first data file is translated using at least one data definition file associated with the at least one document, the at least one data definition file being used to translate the first data file into the at least one second data file; and

transforming the at least one second data file into a normalized third data file having an XML file format, wherein the third data file is normalized according to a data format associated with the second trading partner.

2. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising translating the normalized third data file from an XML file format into a file format requested by the second trading partner.

3. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising accessing an XSLT associated with one of the at least one second data files, the XSLT being used to transform the one of the at least one second data files into the normalized third data file.

4. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising processing the received first data file to determine if the first file format should be modified before the received first data file is translated into the at least one second data file.

5. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising displaying the normalized third data file using a web browser in human-readable format.

6. The method of Claim 5, and further comprising receiving modifications to the displayed third normalized data file, such modifications being made by altering data in fields of the normalized third data file using a browser form.

7. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising communicating a data file corresponding to one or more portions of the normalized third data file to a inventory tracking application of the second trading partner.

8. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising communicating a data file corresponding to one or more portions of the normalized third data file to an order fulfillment application of the second trading partner.

9. The method of Claim 1, and further comprising:
translating the normalized third data file into a fourth data file having a file format desired by the second trading partner; and
communicating the fourth data file to the second trading partner in the desired file format.

10. A method of generating a data definition file, the data definition file being used to translate a data file between a first file format and an XML file format, the method comprising:

5 receiving an implementation guide associated with the first file format, the
implementation guide defining the fields of the first data file;
generating an XML representation of the implementation guide; and
generating the data definition file using the XML representation of the
implementation guide.

11. A system for processing data exchanged between a first trading partner and a second trading partner, the system comprising a processor and memory, the processor operable to execute:

5 a first process operable to determine the file format of a first data file received from the first trading partner and further operable to translate the first data file into a second data file having an XML file format in response to the determined file format and a data definition file;

10 a second process in communication with the first process and operable to transform the second data file into a normalized third data file, wherein the third data file is normalized according to a data format associated with the second trading partner; and

a third process in communication with the second process and operable to apply business rules to the normalized third data file.

12. The system of Claim 11, wherein the third process is further operable to communicate the normalized third data file to a mailbox associated with the second trading partner.

13. The system of Claim 11, and further comprising a preprocessor in communication with the first process, the preprocessor operable to modify the file format of the first data file in response to determining the file format of the first data file prior to the translation.

14. The system of Claim 11, wherein the data definition file is an XML file that includes elements generated in response to an implementation guide.

15. The system of Claim 11, and further comprising an XSLT associated with one of the second data file, the XSLT being used by the second process to transform the second data file into the normalized third data file.

16. The system of Claim 11, and further comprising a rules engine used by the third process to analyze the normalized third data file to determine compliance with a set of rules.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein the set of rules is selected in response to a transaction type determined by interrogating the document type element of the normalized third data file.

18. The system of Claim 16, wherein the rules engine includes standard rules and customer specific business rules.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the standard rules include error-checking rules and compliance rules.

20. The system of Claim 18, wherein the customer specific business rules include validation and transformational rules.

21. The system of Claim 11, and further comprising a communications mailbox, the communications mailbox operable to generate a message to the first trading partner or the second trading partner in response to a predetermined event.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the predetermined event is a rejection of a document associated with the third normalized data file.

23. The system of Claim 21, wherein the predetermined event is an exception condition.

24. The system of Claim 21, wherein the message is customized to the third normalized file.

25. The system of Claim 21, wherein the message includes data from the third normalized data file.

26. A method of conducting electronic commerce by translating a data file between a first file format associated with a first trading partner and an XML file format associated with a second trading partner, the method comprising:

receiving the data file;

5 determining a file format of the data file;

accessing a data definition file associated with the file format;

comparing each segment of the data definition file to each segment of the data file;

and

generating an XML element in response to each match determined between the

10 compared segments.

27. The method of Claim 26, wherein the data definition file is generated in response to an implementation guide received from the first trading partner.

28. The method of Claim 26, wherein the data definition file is an XML file.

29. The method of Claim 26, wherein comparing each segment of the data definition file to each segment of the data file further comprises determining a location of the segment of the data file in response information included in the data definition file.

30. The method of Claim 26, wherein generating an XML element further comprises generating an element tag and associated element data from information included in the matched segment of the data file.